

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-19

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MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: UK STATEMENT AT OCTOBER 31 PLENARY

BEGIN SUMMARY: UK REP (ROSE) INCLUDED IN FINAL VERSION OF
HIS OPENING STATEMENT MINOR AMENDMENTS WHICH HE HAD
DISCUSSED IN AD HOC GROUP EARLIER. TEXT AS DELIVERED
AT OCTOBER 31 PLENARY FOLLOWS: END SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT.

THE SEARCH FOR SECURITY IN EUROPE HAS A LONG AND
CHEQUERED HISTORY. WE MUST ALL BE PROFOUNDLY THANKFUL THAT
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THE 29 YEARS THE CONTINENT HAS SUFFERED NO GENERAL WAR.
BUT DURING MOST OF THAT PERIOD LARGE ARMIES HAVE FACED ONE
ANOTHER ON EACH SIDE OF THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN EAST AND
WEST. PEACE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED, BUT IT HAS BEEN BASED ON

A PRECARIOUS STABILITY INTERRUPTED BY BOUTS OF TENSION. SO IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE PERIOD HAS BEEN MARKED BY A VARIETY OF PROPOSALS, BY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER, WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD WITH THE OBJECT OF PROVIDING AN ASSURANCE OF GREATER SECURITY FOR ALL THOSE COUNTRIES HERE REPRESENTED.

THE INITIATIVE IN PROPOSING NEGOTIATIONS FOR MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS WAS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION AT REYKJAVIK IN JUNE 1968. MY GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE FACT THAT THIS INITIATIVE HAS AT LAST BORN FRUIT AND THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WE, AND OUR ALLIES, HAVE ADVOCATED FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS ARE NOW TO TAKE PLACE.

THIS COULD HARDLY HAVE HAPPENED HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE CLIMATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENTS WITH COUNTRIES OF THE WARSAW PACT, THE BERLIN AGREEMENT OF 1971, THE SALT AGREEMENTS OF 1972 AND PROGRESS MADE IN THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, MARKED BY THE OPENING OF THE SECOND STAGE IN GENEVA LAST MONTH, ALL CONSTITUTE EVIDENCE OF THIS IMPROVEMENT. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO EMBARK ON WHAT MAY PROVE TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DELICATE OF ALL THE NEGOTIATIONS ATTEMPTED SO FAR. FOR THE TALKS INVOLVE THE VITAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF ALL NATIONS HERE REPRESENTED. THEIR PROGRESS AND OUTCOME CANNOT FAIL TO BE MATTERS OF CONCERN TO OTHERS WHO ARE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THEM.

THE SUBJECT IS ONE OF EXTREME COMPLEXITY. BUT THE AIR OF MY GOVERNMENT IS SIMPLY STATED. IT IS TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AT A LOWER LEVEL OF FORCES. WE WANT TO ACHIEVE THIS BY REDUCING THE LEVEL OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS ON BOTH SIDES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. BUT OUR LABOUR WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING AND INDEED DANGEROUS IF, AT THE END OF IT ALL, THE MILITARY SITUATION IN EUROPE WAS LESS STABLE THAN IT IS TODAY. SO WE
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MUST SET OURSELVES, AS A MINIMUM, THE TASK OF ENSURING THAT OUR SECURITY REMAINS UNDIMINISHED. INDEED IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO HOPE THAT, WITH THE LOWERING OF TENSION WHICH SHOULD RESULT FROM THE REDUCTIONS WE AIM TO NEGOTIATE, IT MAY BE INCREASED.

WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES WE SHALL HAVE TO OVERCOME. MANY OF THEM STEM FROM THE FACTS OF THE EXISTING MILITARY SITUATION. AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS I SHOULD LIKE TO SUMMARISE THE PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH GOVERN THE BRITISH APPROACH. WE TAKE AS OUR STARTING POINT THE FACT THAT CENTRAL EUROPE IS A ZONE OF CRUCIAL STRATEGIC

IMPORTANCE AND THAT THERE IS AT PRESENT A SIGNIFICANT DISPARITY OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS THERE IN FAVOUR OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. AND THIS DISPARITY IS ENHANCED BY THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES WHICH THESE COUNTRIES DERIVE FROM GEOGRAPHY. THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL PROBLEMS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE TACKLED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. LIKE OUR ALLIES, WE BELIEVE THAT IT COULD ULTIMATELY BE MET BY THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A COMMON CEILING FOR THE GROUND FORCES OF EAST AND WEST IN CENTRAL EUROPE. BUT WE SHOULD BEGIN BY DISCUSSING THE FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE OF THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY ON EITHER SIDE, E.E. THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION.

SECONDLY, WE SHALL NEED TO FIND MEANS OF ASSURING ONE ANOTHER THAT THE GREATER STABILITY WHICH WE SHALL SEEK WILL NOT BE DISTURBED BY ANY ACTION WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED. WE SHALL NEED TO GUARD AGAINST CIRCUM- CENTION OF THE AGREEMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR VERIFICATION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION. OUR PURPOSE WILL BE TO INHIBIT EITHER SIDE FROM SEEKING UNILATERAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE OVER THE OTHER. WITHOUT SUCH ASSURANCE NO COUNTRY COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT THEIR SECURITY REMAINED UNDIMINISHED.

THIRDLY, WE SHALL WISH TO ENSURE THAT THE RESULTS OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT UNDERMINE THE OBLIGATIONS WE HAVE ASSUMED TOWARDS OUR ALLIES, NOR PREJUDICE - DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY - THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

I HAVE MADE CLEAR THE IMPORTANCE WHICH MY GOVERNMENT ATTACH TO THESE NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER DIFFICULT THEY MAY BE,
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WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT THEY SHOULD BE THOROUGH. WE FOR OUR PART ARE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AS LONG AS IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SATISFACTORY RESULTS. A START WAS MADE IN THE EXPLORATORY TALKS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN VIENNA EARLIER IN THE YEAR. AS ONE OF THOSE WHO DID NOT TAKE PART IN THOSE TALKS, I SHOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO DID FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE OPENING OF THESE SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS. AS WE EMBARK ON THEM, WE ARE CONSCIOUS THAT THERE ARE STILL MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EAST AND THOSE OF THE WEST WHICH REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED. BUT WE BELIEVE THAT ALL OF US HERE SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS GIVES US CONFIDENCE THAT SUCH AN OUTCOME CAN BE ACHIEVED PROVIDED WE ALL APPROACH OUR TASK CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND IN GOOD FAITH, AND WITH THE CAUTION WHICH IS DUE TO ITS VITAL IMPORT- ANCE. IT IS THE FIRM DETERMINATION OF MY GOVERNMENT TO DO THIS. WE THEREFORE LOOK FORWARD TO PLAYING OUR FULL PART IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS ON MUTUAL REDUCTION OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS AND ASSOCIATED MEASURES IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

I SHOULD LIKE TO END BY ADDING MY GOVERNMENTS THANKS
TO THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR GENEROUS HOSPITALITY.
WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE EFFORTS THEY HAVE MADE TO PROVIDE FOR OUR
CONVENIENCE AND TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE ALL THE FACILITIES WE
NEED FOR THIS CONFERENCE, AND ARE DULY GRATEFUL TO THEM.

END TEXT.HUMES

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